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ABSTRACT

The hogan (home) represents a focal point in Navajo thought and life as the physical site where parental instruction occurs and as a symbol of ideal values. This text presents, very simply, the various types of hogans and hogan contents with information on their cultural meaning and the Navajo and English terminology for each item. While emphasizing oral and written language skills, the book is more generally aimed at teaching cultural concepts and values which reflect the importance of family and clan ties and the concept of right and respectful relations with others and nature. The 16 pages of illustrations and graphics are large and geared toward children in the lower primary grades, although the text may be used throughout the elementary grades and as an informational supplement for teachers at all levels of instruction. As an adjunct activity, illustrations can be photocopied and colored, painted, or otherwise elaborated by students. While this book is written primarily for Navajo students, it can be used successfully as an addition to a multicultural curriculum when studying variation in human habitation, family organization, residence patterns, and home life. A bibliography cites five additional references. (Author/NEC)

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HOOGHAN BAAHANE'

A Book About the Hogan

Revised Edition

by

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Produced by

Title IV-B Materials Development Project
Navajo Curriculum Center
Rough Rock Demonstration School
Rough Rock, Arizona

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NOTES TO THE TEACHER

The hogan represents a focal point in Navajo thought and life. As the physical site where parental instruction occurs and as a symbol of ideal values, the hogan is the center of the child's early socialization experience. Traditional teaching methods, still very vital to Navajo family organization, utilize the hogan as the starting point for instruction and as the primary bridge to other aspects of the child's experience. Life begins in the hogan and from there, spirals in an ever widening circle to broader, more complex realities.

This text presents, very simply, the various types of hogans and hogan contents with information on their cultural meaning and the Navajo and English terminology for each item. While emphasizing oral and written language skills, the book is more generally aimed at teaching cultural concepts and values. Students who benefit from this instruction may come from homes having any variety of structural type. The significance of this book is its ability to convey the lesson that, while there is a host of structural home **types** or **styles,** the values associated with the hogan are universal. These values reflect the importance of family and clan ties and the concept of *k'é,* "right and respectful relations with others and nature." The hogan provides both the actual location where such values are traditionally transmitted from generation to generation, and a symbol for ideal thought and action.

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From the beginning of life the child is taught that the hogan lies at life's core. At birth, the child's head is turned toward the hogan fire so the "soft spot" on top can be heated and properly shaped, thereby shaping thought and behavior as well. As the child grows and develops, the fire, situated at the center of the hogan interior, becomes the warm, inviting spot where parents and grandparents recite stories and share the comforting support of their own life experiences. Performing household chores and caring for items inside of, and associated with the hogan — such as the fire poker or family sheep herd — furnish the child's first lessons in adult responsibility.

At puberty, a girl's initiation into womanhood revolves around the themes of the hogan and family life. Her four-day ceremony or *Kinaaldâ** usually occurs in the family hogan, which has been blessed and is considered a sacred place for the duration of the ceremony. The girl's main activities during this time are grinding corn, cooking and serving meals to guests, running, and other physical and mental tasks designed to increase her endurance, cement the value of right or "good thinking" (*yâ'át'éego ntsékees*), and prepare her for the role of female household head. Throughout the ceremony and all stages of development, parents and elders repeat the admonition to "Let the hogan be your thought

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*According to Young and Morgan's **The Navajo Language** (1981, p. 494), the terminology for this ceremony probably stems from the verb form *Kina* (literally, "about house"), referring to the "isolation of girls at first menstruation, in small structures where they were obliged to stay for a period of time."

. . . . Let the land be your thought. . . . Let all these valuable possessions (associated with the hogan) be your thought. . . ."

Preparing Lessons on the Hogan

The hogan, then, is a key factor in the individual's training for adulthood. As such, it should be included as an integral component in a Navajo bilingual-bicultural education program.

In using this text, the teacher will first want to read the section which follows ("The Hogan and Its Significance"). This contains the major instructional content for the illustrations, providing information on the cultural meaning of various hogan types and artifacts in the hogan, and is the basis for lesson plans using the illustrations. Suggested lessons should combine the informational content with the illustrations, incorporating instructional objectives developed by the teacher that are in line with an overall Navajo social studies curriculum. (The teacher may, of course, wish to expand or revise the information in the following section according to his or her personal teaching style and student needs.) As an adjunct activity, illustrations can be photocopied and colored, painted, or otherwise elaborated by students.

The teacher is urged to use this text in conjunction with resource people drawn from the community. A lecture or series of stories told by elders will greatly assist in transmitting the social and affective value skills to be generated in a lesson on the hogan.

The illustrations and graphics are large and geared toward children in the lower primary grades. The text may nonetheless be used throughout the elementary phases, and as an informational supplement to teachers at all levels of instruction.

While this book is written primarily for Navajo students, it can also be used successfully with non-Navajo students as an addition to a multicultural curriculum. Suggestions for use in this case include units on variation in human habitation, and cross-cultural studies of family organization, residence patterns, and home life.

Acknowledgements

The editor would like to thank Mrs. Shirley Begay, the co-author, who has so generously shared her time and knowledge of Navajo social life and traditional methods of instruction through all stages of child development. This text, as so many others produced by Rough Rock Demonstation School, benefits greatly from her experience and understanding of children.

The revised edition of this publication could not have been undertaken without the combined efforts of the Materials Development artist, Fred Bia, and Regina Lynch, secretary and editorial assistant. We are grateful also to the fine work and advice of Mr. Wilbert Begay, school printer.

Finally, this book is dedicated to Rough Rock's leadership — its community members, School Board, and Executive Director — and to the children here, from whom we draw support and for whom we continue our efforts.

Teresa McCarty

Navajo Curriculum Center
June 1982

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THE HOGAN AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Types of Hogans

There are many kinds of homes. The Navajo people, however, recognize two main hogan types: the forked stick (male) hogan (*'ałch'i' 'adeez'á*) and the stacked log (female) hogan (*hooghan dah diitł' ini; tsin dah diitł' ini hooghan*). Besides these two main types , the following shelters are also used: the circular stone hogan (female; *tsé beehooghaní*), four-legged hogan (female; *hooghan bijáád dį́ į́*), sweathouse (male; *táchéé'h*), underground hogan (*łeeyi'*), summer shelter (*chaha' oh*), modern house (*tsineheeshjíí' bee kin*), and the trailer house or mobile home (*hooghan naadzį́zį́*).

The male or forked stick hogan has two legs and is named for its cone-like shape with three poles jutting from the pointed top. The front entrance is lower than the top and often extends several feet from the main structure, causing the hogan to appear to be kneeling with arms extended forward. This construction allows the building to withstand strong winds or storms.

The female, stacked log hogan usually has six or more sides and is made by placing long poles on top of each other to form the walls. The logs are joined and sometimes completely covered with mud chinks. The circular stone hogan (also considered female) is made of local materials and is chinked with mud (although nowadays cement or other modern mortar materials may be used).

The doorway to all hogans faces east. The east entrance represents the **thinking**, **reasoning**, **planning** and **philosophy** of the Navajo people. The post to the right of the doorway represents **life**, while the north-facing post represents **confidence**. The entire hogan or home is said to reflect the owner's religion or philosophy.

Placing the entrance facing east allows the sun's early morning rays to penetrate directly into the hogan interior. The sun carries thoughts, planning, and valuable material items, in particular, the four precious stones: white bead from the east, turquoise from the south, abalone from the west, and black jet from the north. When the sun moves directly overhead at noon it shines into the smoke hole located at the top of the hogan. This, it is said, symbolizes the bringing of necessary material and non-material blessings, including varieties of food, good thoughts, and a proper philosophy toward everyday events and family life.

Essential Hogan Contents

All shelters or homes except the sweathouse* should include these essential elements: fire (*kǫ'*), fire poker (*honeeshgish*), food (especially corn products and other "food grown in the earth" or "food that is good for the body;" *ch' iyáán ałtaas' éíí, ch' iyáán 'ats' íís ba yá' át' éehii*), a set of upper and lower mill stones (*tsé daashjéé' dóó daashch' íní*), brush

*The sweathouse is used only by males for taking sweatbaths.

for the mill stones (*tsé bee nalzhǫ́*), dark greasewood stirring sticks (*idistsiin*), soft goods (*yadí*), and hard precious goods including precious stones (nitł iz).

The fire poker is one of the most important items in the hogan. It should be kept near the fire at all times, and is believed to have the power to ward off evil because it is not afraid of anything. The fire poker can be used to bring down a child's fever by inserting it in hot ashes and then pressing the warm (but not overly hot) poker on the child's limbs. Blowing on the top of the poker following this ministration will "blow away the fever." The wood used for a fire poker must be carefully selected, and when the poker becomes small and worn it should not be casually discarded. Instead, it should be placed in a slot over the east-facing door. This will protect the hogan and its owners against evil and misfortune, even when the family is away from home.

Building and Blessing a Hogan

Locating the proper place to build a hogan was the initial dilemma faced by First Man and First Woman when they emerged to the fourth or "glittering" world (the present world). This decision remains important today.

On their emergence, First Man and First Woman saw many trails — the Wind Trails, Ant Trails, Lizard People's Trails — all indicating that these beings lived in and occupied a

certain location. A diagnostic ceremony was performed to discover an appropriate site for building the first hogan. (This ceremony is still used today, but is primarily aimed at diagnosing illnesses and determining the required curing ritual.)

Once a hogan has been built, a fire is started in the fire place or stove, located at the hogan's center. This is said to be the heart and life of the home. The hogan is then blessed in a ceremony which requires at least two prayers and four songs (although sometimes twelve songs are sung).

In blessing the hogan, a family member (usually a household head) stands in the doorway and moves in a clockwise direction, marking the four main posts with corn pollen or white corn meal. The individual is expected to think about his life goals and the beginning of a new life center (the new hogan), and about the meaning of the four posts. The owners pray that they will be blessed with good thoughts and proper planning, that their path will always be blessed, and that they will live in harmony with the land and nature.

Every living thing is said to have a home which is the center of all life. Regardless of its size or shape, the home or hogan is a treasured structure, representing the ideal values of the Navajo people, *Diné*.

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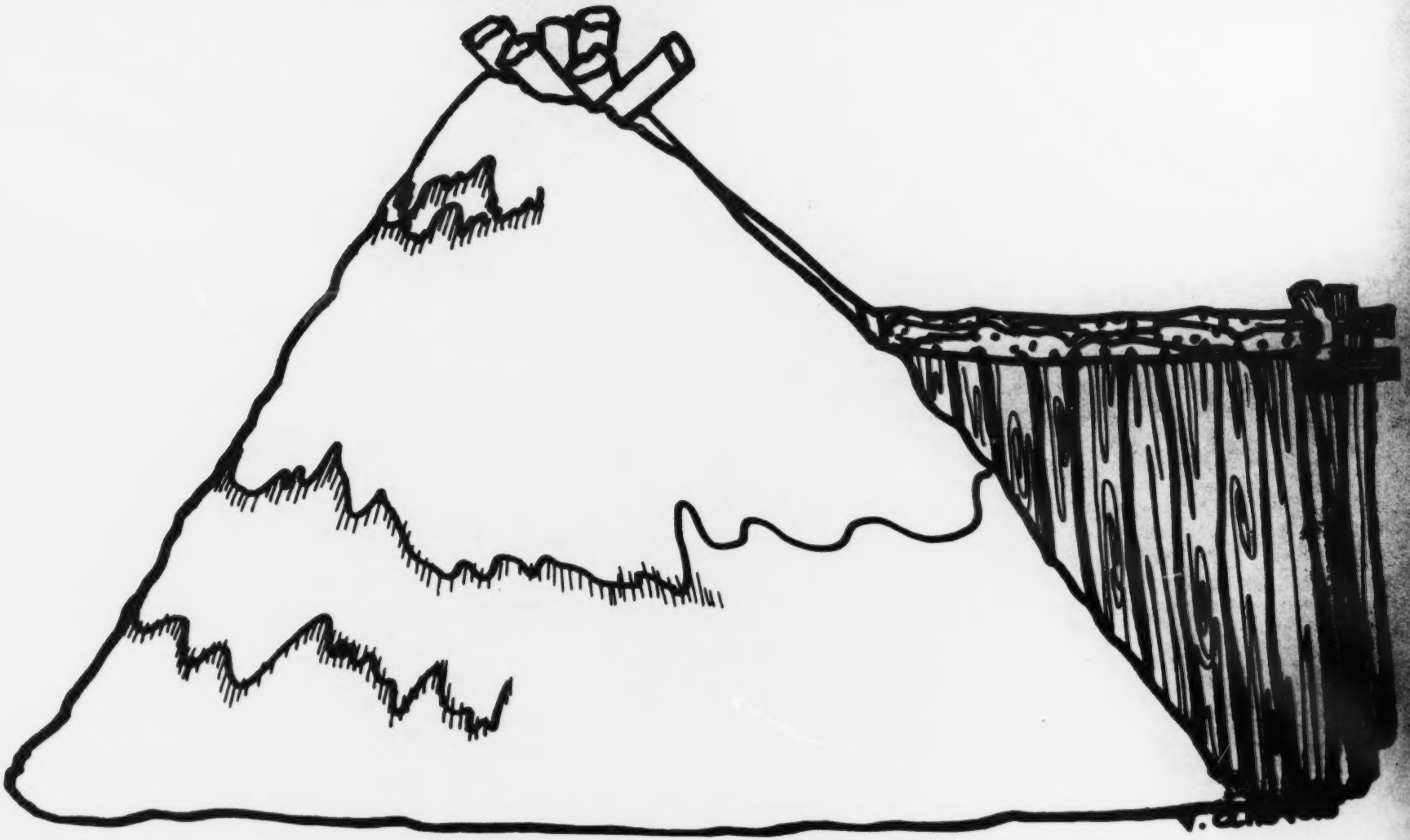
*n.d. indicates no date for publication.

I. TYPES OF HOGANS



FORKED STICK HOGAN (Male)

'AŁCH' I' 'ADEEZ' Á

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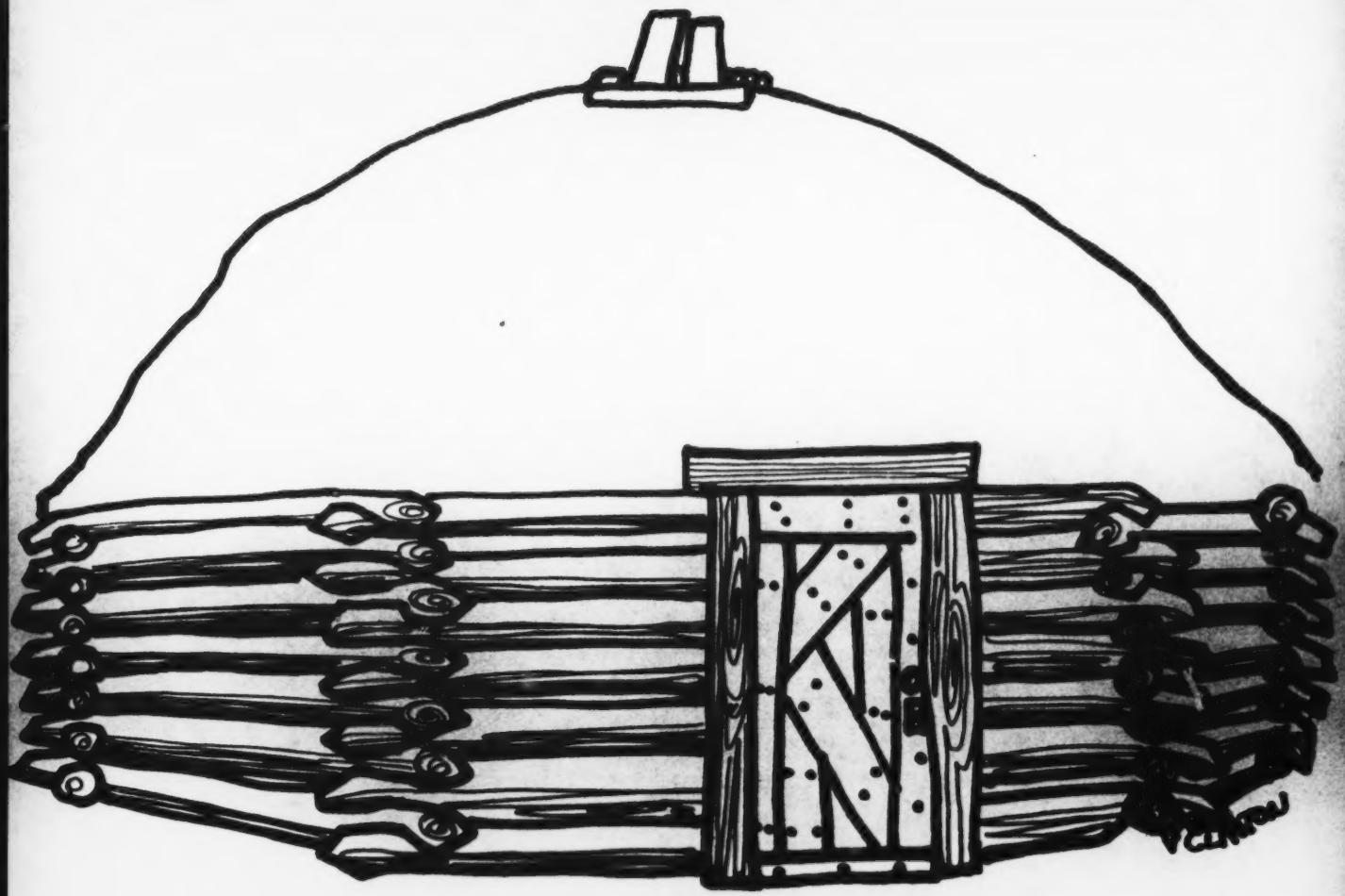

STACKED LOG HOGAN (female)

HOOGHAN DAH DIITŁ' INI

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SWEATHOUSE (Male)

TÁCHÉÉH

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FOUR-LEGGED HOGAN (female)

HOOGHAN BIJÁÁD DÍ' Í'

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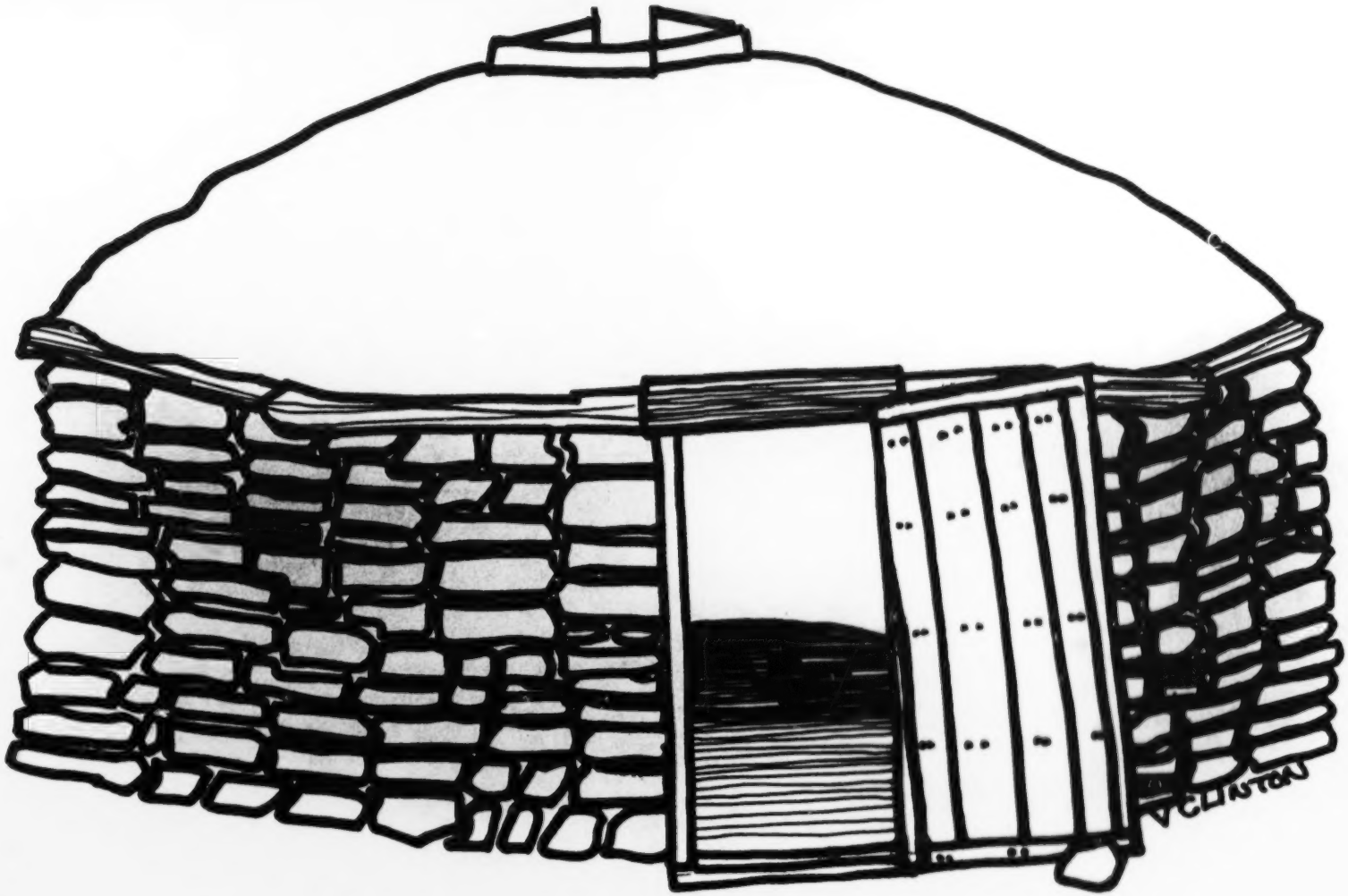

CIRCULAR STONE HOGAN (female)

TSÉ BEEHOOGHANÍ

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SUMMER SHADE HOUSE

CHAHA' OH

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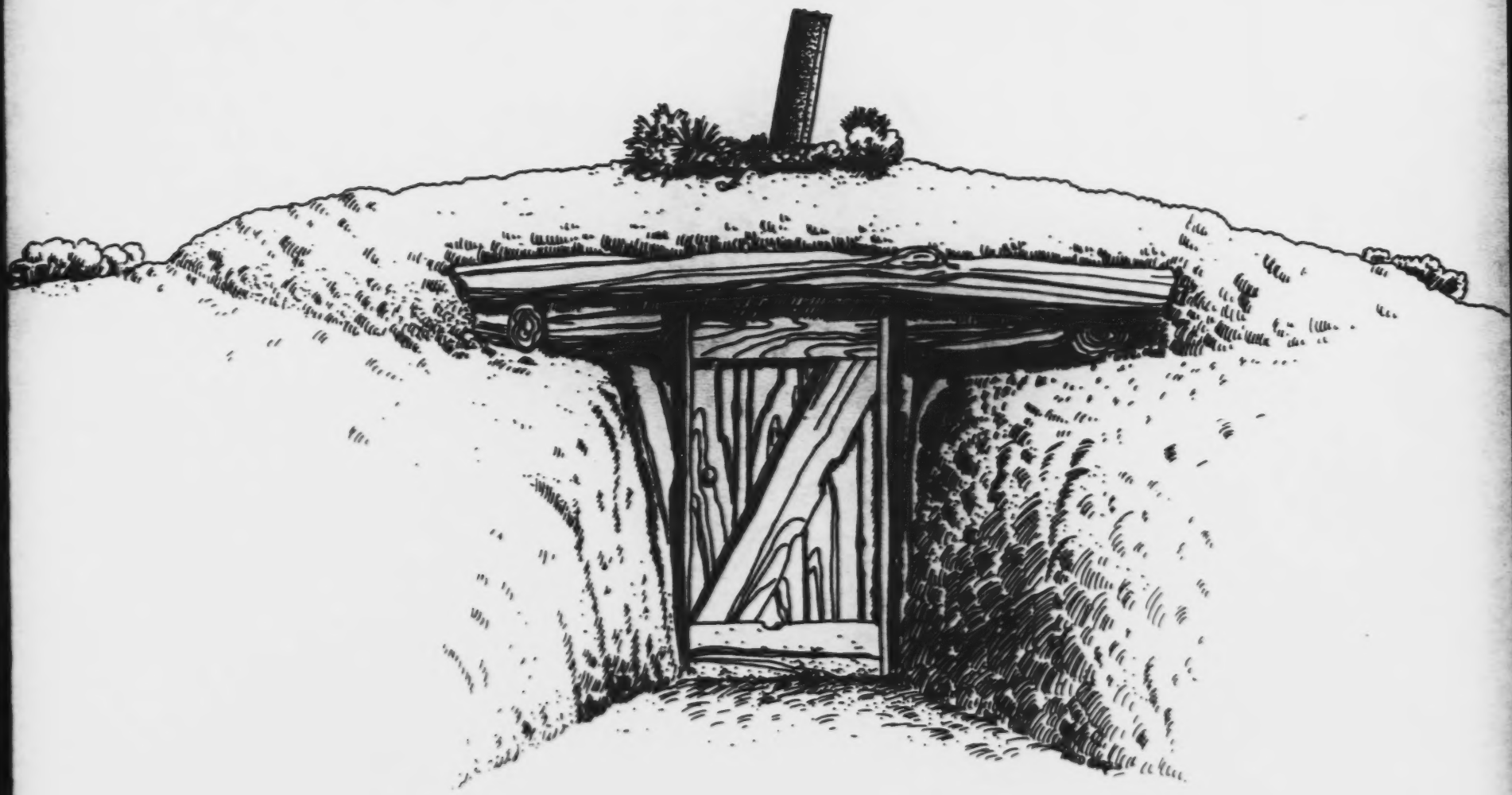

UNDERGROUND HOGAN

ŁEEYI'

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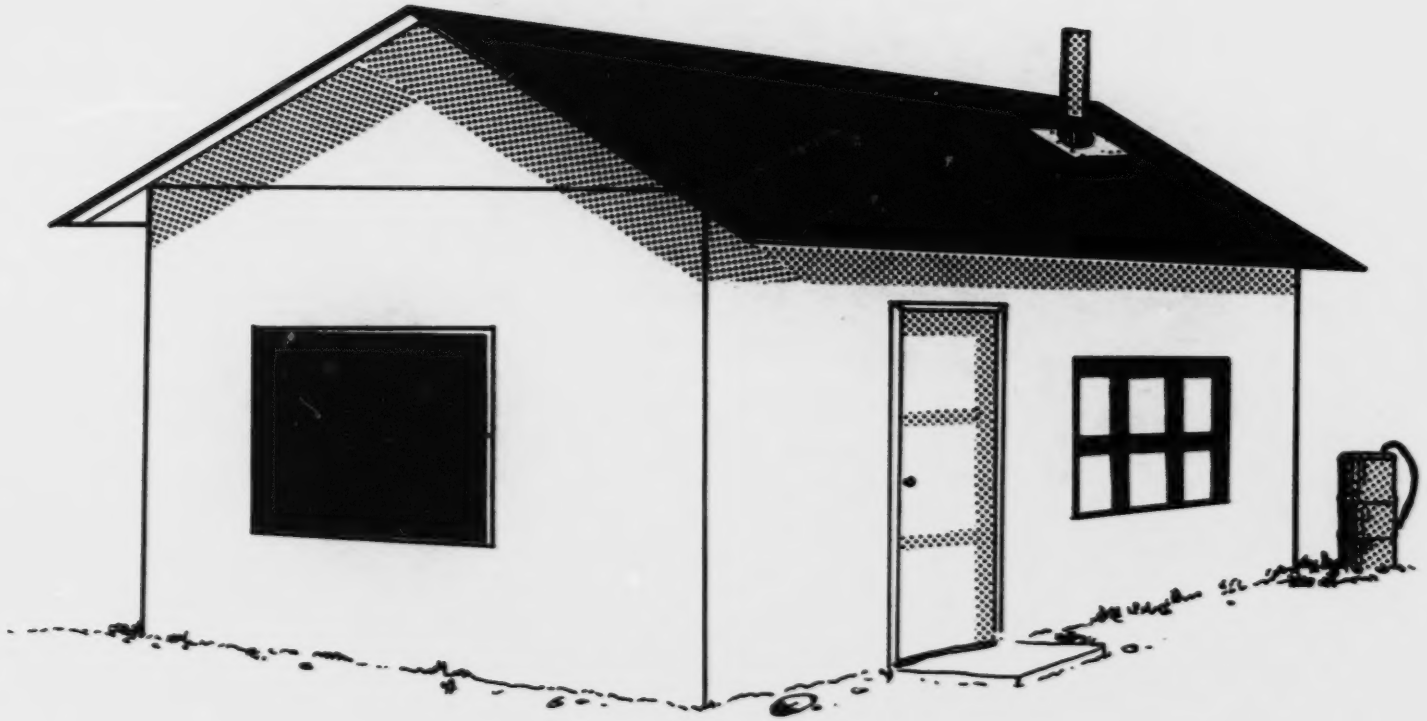

MODERN HOUSE

TSINEHEESHJÍÍʔ BEE KIN

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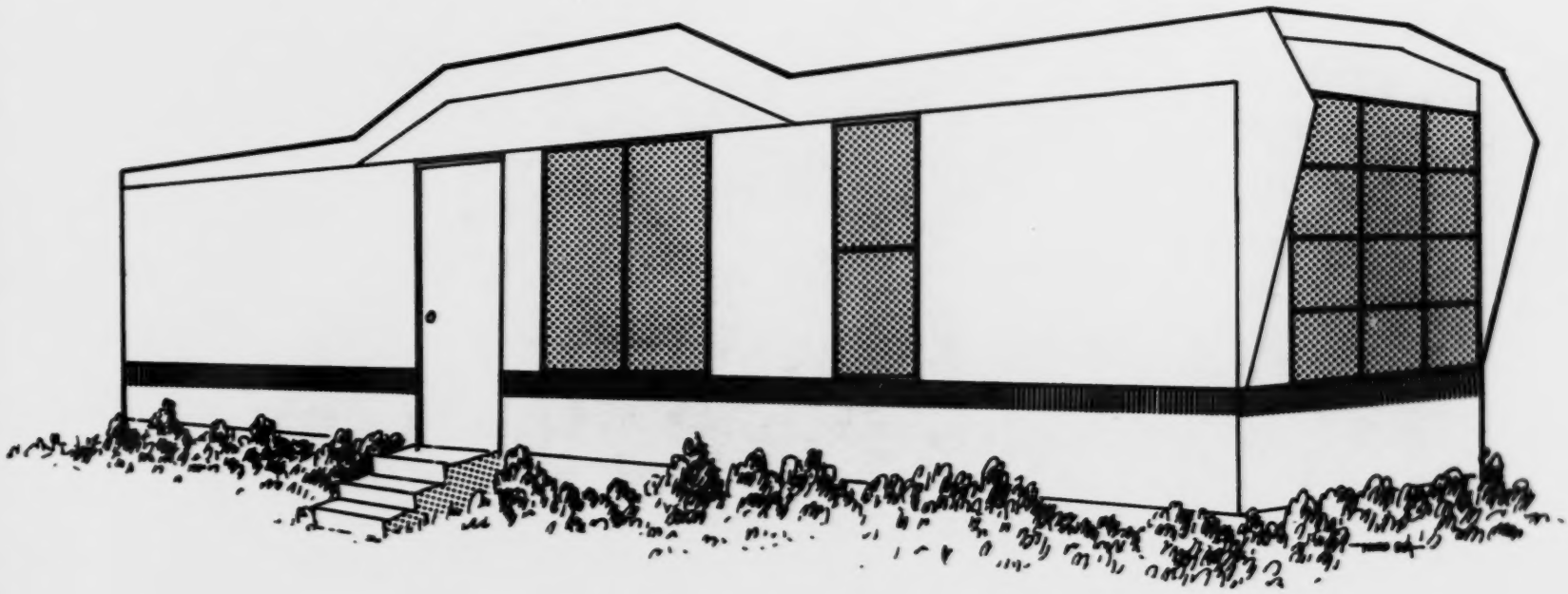

MOBILE HOME

HOOGHAN NAADZÍZÍ

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II. HOGAN CONTENTS

FIRE AND WATER - TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

KǪ' DÓÓ́ TÓ

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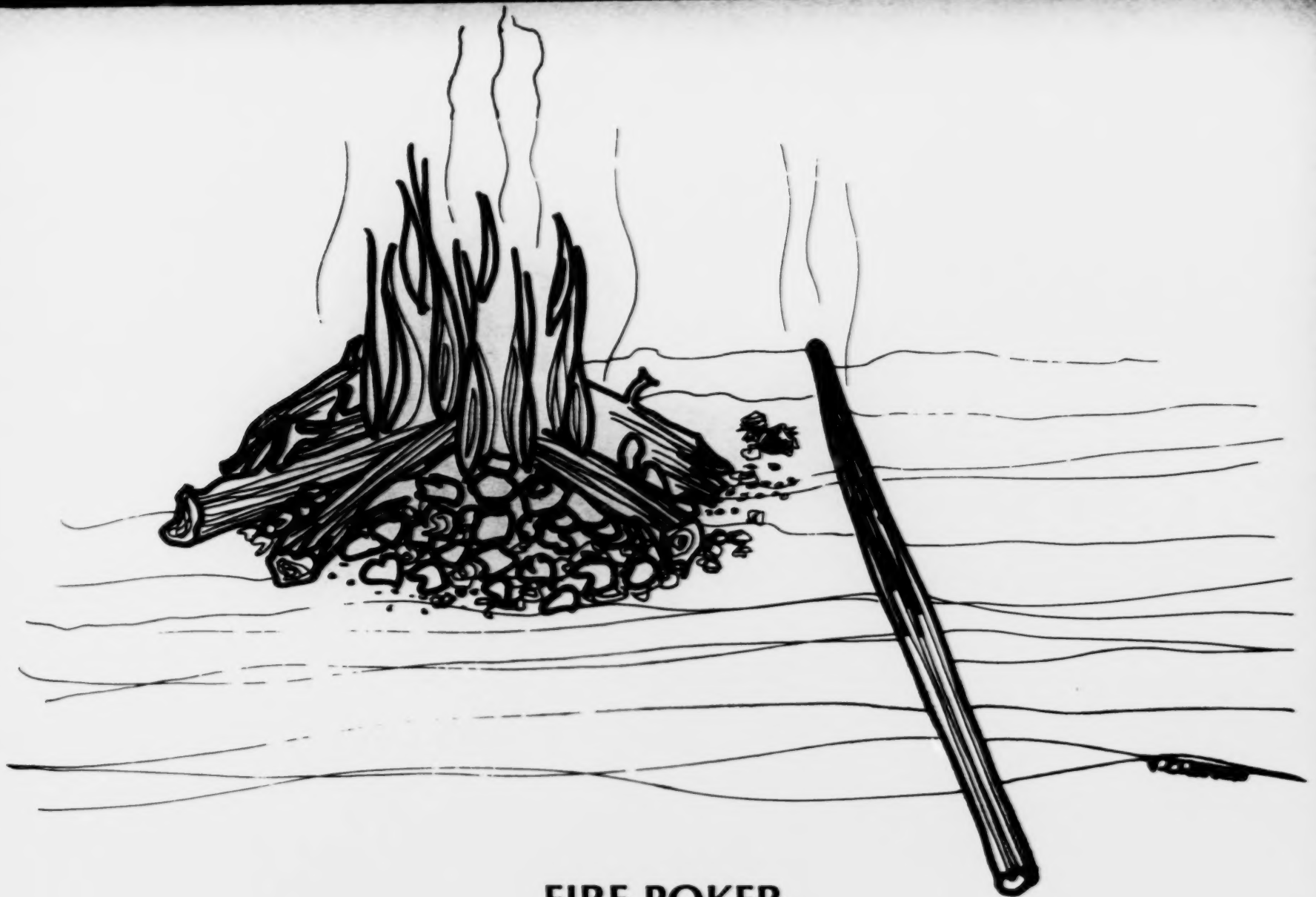

FIRE POKER

HONEESGISH

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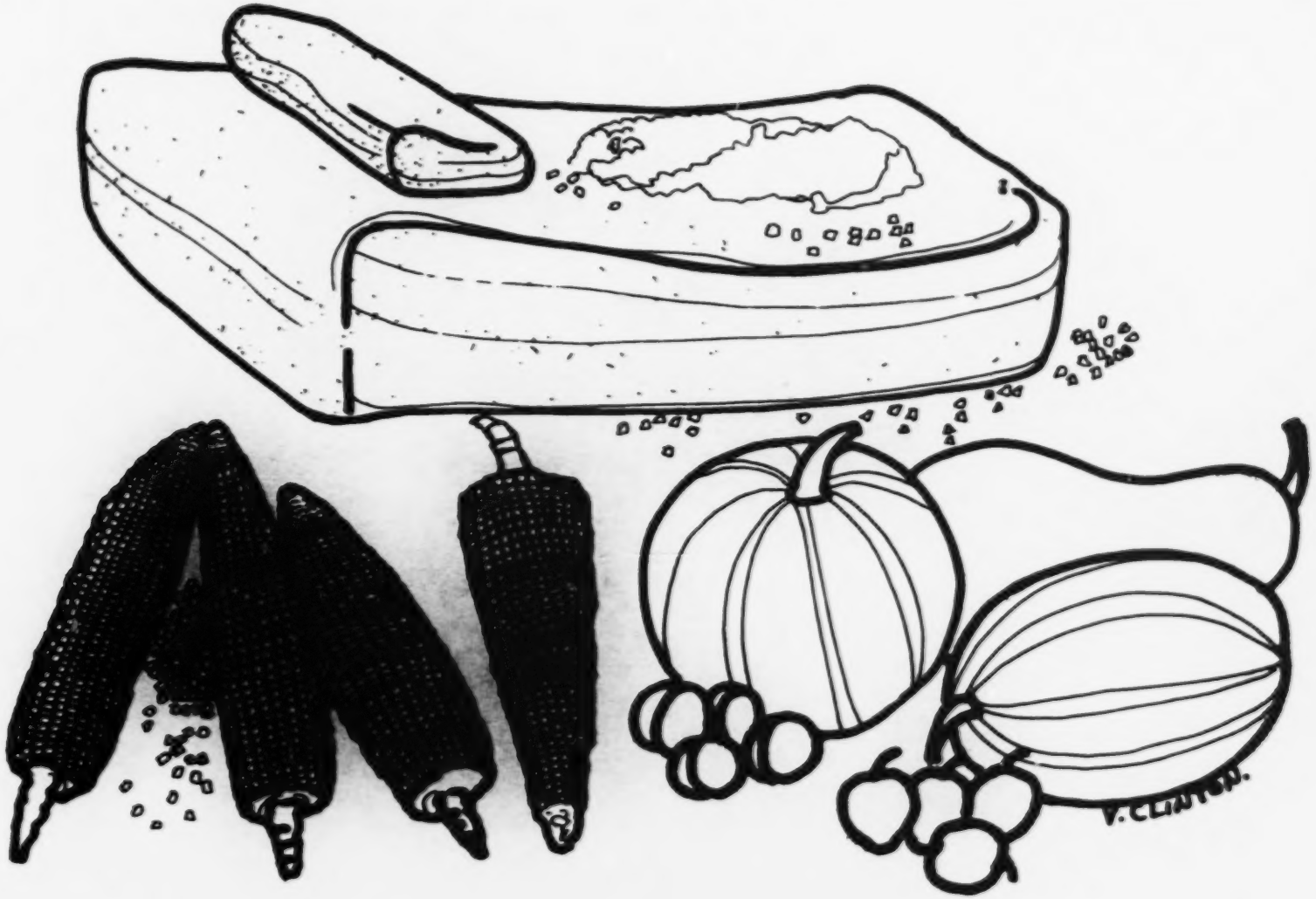

FOOD FROM THE EARTH

CH' IYÁÁN ALTAAS' ÉÍÍ

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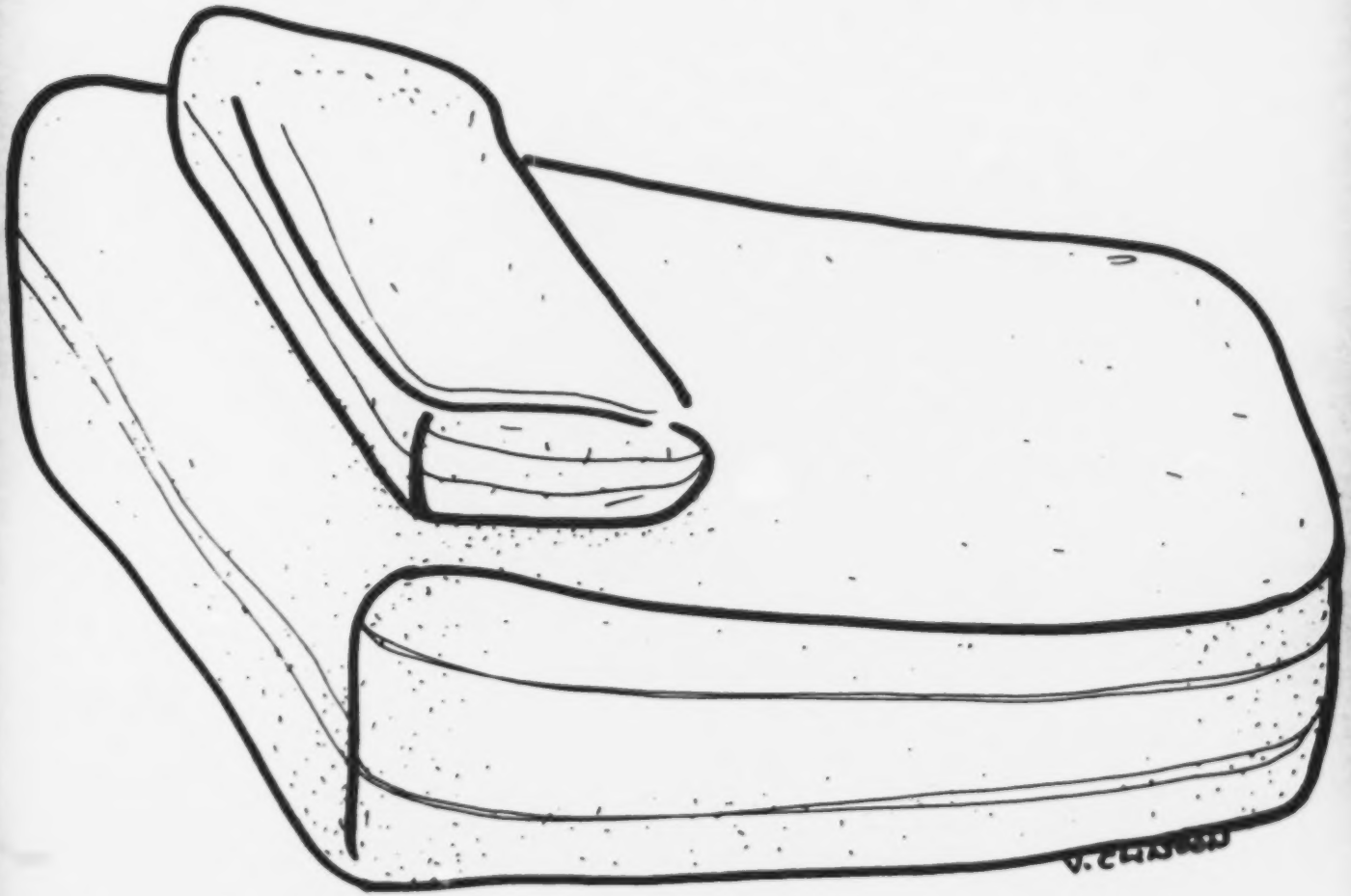

UPPER AND LOWER MILL STONES

TSÉ DAASHJÉÉ' DÓÓ DAASHCH' ÍNÍ

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BRUSH

TSÉ BEE NALZHÓ

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DARK GREASEWOOD STIRRING STICKS

IDISTSIIN

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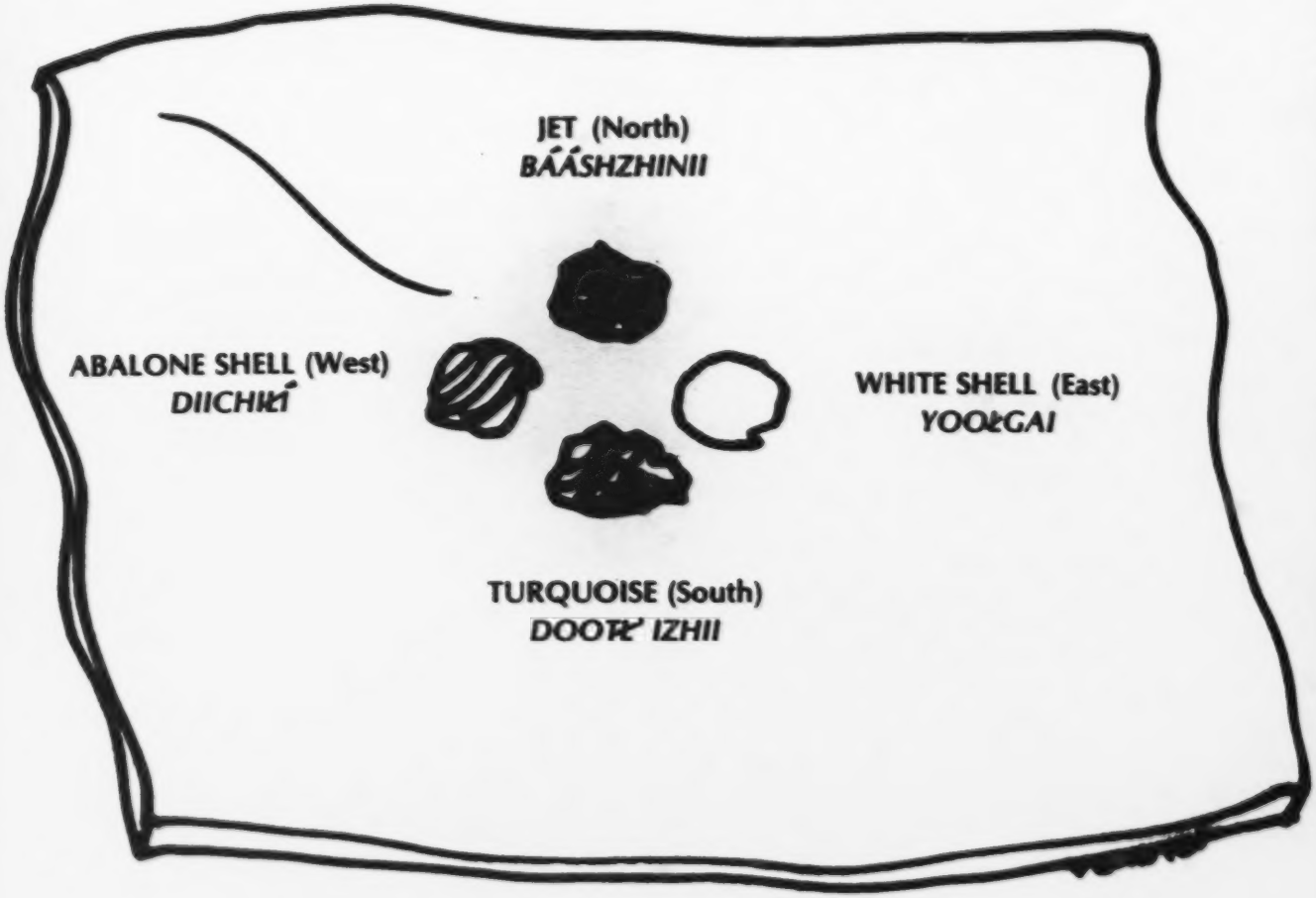

PRECIOUS STONES

NITŁ' IZ

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